

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for enabling phone users to participate in an instant messaging based conference, comprising the steps of:

receiving a PSTN telephone call at a PSTN-based teleconferencing system from a PSTN-based telephone, wherein said teleconferencing system is communicatively linked to an instant messaging system managing the conference, wherein said teleconferencing system and said messaging system are directly coupled by a speech processing system;

receiving at said speech processing system a speech input received by said PSTN
~~from a telephone through a conventional teleconferencing system;~~

transcribing the speech input to a first text message using said speech processing system;

transmitting the first text message to a plurality of devices participating in
~~to an instant messaging network belonging to the instant messaging based conference;~~

receiving at said speech processing system a second text message from any one among the plurality of devices participating in
~~the instant messaging based conference;~~

converting the second text message to a speech output; and

transmitting the speech output to the telephone via the PSTN-based
~~conventional teleconferencing system.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of converting the second text message further comprises the step of using a simulated voice print of the user signature associated with any one among the plurality of devices ~~coupled to the instant messaging network~~ to provide the speech output with a personalized voice output at the telephone.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said speech subsystem converts the step of converting the second text message comprises the step of converting the second text message to the speech output by using text-to-speech conversion.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of translating the first text message to another language to provide a translated first text message.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein the method further comprises~~ further comprising the steps of:

prior to said step of receiving a speech input, identifying a user associated with said PSTN telephone;

prior to said converting step, translating the second text message to another language to provide a translated second text message for subsequent speech output, wherein said another language is specified by a profile associated with said identified user associated with said telephone.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting the first text message comprises the step of transmitting a text stream.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A system for enabling phone users to participate in an instant messaging based conference, comprising:

an instant messaging subsystem having a data network port for managing a plurality of instant messaging devices participating in said conference;

a PSTN teleconferencing susbsystem, having a[[n]] PSTN network input port for receiving calls from a calling party's PSTN telephone speech input via a conventional teleconferencing system; and

a speech processing subsystem directly coupling said messaging and said teleconferencing subsystems, wherein said speech processing subsystem comprises:

a speech-to-text converter for converting ~~[[the]]~~ a calling party's speech input to a text message for transmission to said participating devices using said an instant messaging subsystem; and

a text-to-speech converter for converting text messages received from any one among the participating devices ~~the instant messaging system~~ to a speech output for transmission to said PSTN telephone using the PSTN conventional teleconferencing subsystem.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8, wherein ~~the system further comprises an~~ said instant messaging devices are selected from the group of devices comprising a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a smartphone.

11. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the system further comprises a translator for translating the text message into another language for transmission to at least one among [[an]] said instant messaging devices as translated text and to [[a]] said telephone ~~coupled to the teleconferencing system~~ as a translated speech output.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[12]] 8, wherein the text-to-speech converter synthesizer uses a simulated voice print signature of the called party in producing the audible output.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10, wherein the instant messaging device further comprises a display for displaying at least one among the text message from the calling party and text messages from the instant messaging device.

15. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 10, wherein the text messages streams are received and transmitted over [[an]] said instant messaging[[/chat]] subsystem in substantially real-time.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 10, wherein the text messages streams are received and transmitted over [[a]] said instant messaging subsystem using data transmission protocols.

17. (Currently amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the system further comprises a user profile data store for storing a plurality of user profiles associated with

at least one among the calling party and the participating instant messaging devices, wherein said user profiles specify whether to [[for]] convert[[ing]] at least one among text messages from an instant messaging device into a customized speech output for transmission to the calling party and text messages from the calling party to alternate text messages as defined by a user.

18. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable storage, having stored thereon a computer program having a plurality of code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

receiving a PSTN telephone call at a PSTN-based teleconferencing system from a PSTN-based telephone, wherein said teleconferencing system is communicatively linked to an instant messaging system managing a instant message based conference, wherein said teleconferencing system and said messaging system are directly coupled by a speech processing system;

receiving at said speech processing system a speech input received by said PSTN from a telephone through a conventional teleconferencing system;

transcribing the speech input to a first text message using said speech processing system;

transmitting the first text message to a plurality of devices participating in coupled to an instant messaging network belonging to the instant messaging based conference;

receiving at said speech processing system a second text message from any one among the plurality of devices participating in[[on]] the instant messaging based conference;

converting the second text message to a speech output; and

transmitting the speech output to the telephone via the PSTN-based conventional teleconferencing system.

19. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage of claim 18, further comprising code sections for ~~wherein the machine-readable storage is further programmed to translate~~ translating at least one among the first text message to an alternate first text message and the second text message to an alternate second text message for transmission as a speech output.